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The Romanian Ground Forces

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An Intelligence Assessment

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SOV 84-10007CX

February 1984

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The Romanian Ground Forces

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
Office of Soviet Analysis. Comments and queries are
welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Theater
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**The Romanian
Ground Forces**

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Key Judgments*Information available
as of 15 December 1983
was used in this report.*

Romania under Ceausescu has resisted Soviet domination more consistently than any other member of the Warsaw Pact. Since the Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Romanians have regarded their nominal Pact allies as the most likely military threat and have adopted a Yugoslav-style defense strategy—the only independent defense strategy in the Pact—to deter a similar Pact intervention in Romania. To compensate for their vulnerable strategic position, the Romanians have cultivated their diplomatic and economic relations with the West, China, and the Third World to balance their ties with the Soviet Union.

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Romania's fear of its allies is reflected in its ambiguous position within the Pact's military structure. The Romanians interpret the Treaty of Warsaw strictly as a defensive alliance. Although they have promised to support their allies if NATO attacks, they have refused to participate in any joint measures to prepare for war with NATO. To emphasize their position, the Romanians have:

- Refused to participate in any joint field exercises since 1968.
- Rejected Soviet proposals to integrate the Pact's military forces in peacetime.
- Refused to consult or inform the Pact of the reorganization of their ground forces in 1980.
- Developed domestic defense industries and purchased Western and Chinese weapons to reduce dependence on their allies.

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Despite improvements in the Romanian ground forces in the early 1980s, the Romanians could contribute little to a Pact campaign in the Balkans. The Romanian ground forces are organized and prepared for regional defense and are among the worst equipped and trained units in the Pact for offensive operations. These units would require substantial Soviet assistance and additional training before undertaking offensive operations against Greece or Turkey. As a result, Romania's role, at least during the initial stages of a Pact conflict with NATO, probably would be limited to guarding the lines of communication between the Soviet Union and the Balkans.

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The Romanian Ground Forces

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Soviet-Romanian Relations

Romania under President Nicolae Ceausescu has resisted Soviet domination more consistently and more vocally than any other current member of the Warsaw Pact. Because it is bounded on three sides by members of the Pact, Romania cannot risk withdrawing from the alliance as Albania—which has no common border with a Pact state—did in 1968. Nevertheless, the Romanians have insulated themselves from Soviet control as much as possible. To compensate partially for their vulnerable strategic position, the Romanians have balanced their ties to the Pact by cultivating diplomatic and economic relations with the West, China, and the Third World. They have often taken diplomatic positions critical of Soviet policies, such as their denunciation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

- Refusing proposals by the Soviets for joint field training and severely restricting their participation in joint staff exercises.¹
- Refusing to send Romanian officers to Soviet military schools for training.
- Forbidding the presence in, or transit across, Romania of foreign troops or the deployment of Romanian forces outside the country in peacetime. (The Romanians have only permitted small Pact combat units to cross their country three times over the past 15 years.)
- Developing domestic defense industries to reduce their dependence on their allies for weapons and military equipment.

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Special Status

The Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 defined the limits of Soviet tolerance for independence among its Pact allies and also clarified Romania's subsequent status within the Pact. Romania is the only current member of the Pact that did not participate in the invasion. As Pact forces entered Czechoslovakia, Ceausescu warned publicly that the Romanians, unlike the Czechoslovaks, would resist any similar "fraternal assistance" by the Pact. To emphasize this point, he mobilized Romanian ground forces.

The Romanians defend their position within the Pact by interpreting the Treaty of Warsaw strictly as a defensive alliance. They have promised repeatedly to honor their commitments under the treaty if any of their allies is attacked; however, they have refused to conduct any joint military planning with their allies or to accept Soviet proposals to increase Pact control over national forces in peacetime.

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Pact Control

The question of Pact control over national forces had little impact on Romania until the late 1970s. Until then, Soviet authorities emphasized the modernization of their own forces and the need for their Pact allies to adopt comparable standards of equipment and training. Moreover, the Soviets stressed improving their own and allied military capabilities opposite NATO's Central Region during this period; the Pact's military capabilities opposite NATO's weaker Southern Region were regarded as less important. Despite recent improvements, even Soviet forces in southeastern Europe are still relatively poorly equipped and trained in comparison with Soviet forces in central Europe and the western USSR.

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In the aftermath, the Romanians took several measures to insulate their forces from the Pact. These measures included:

- Adopting a Yugoslav-style defense policy, "the defense of the nation by the entire population," based on guerrilla warfare.
- Reviving the local militia forces, the Patriotic Guards, as an integral part of the new defense policy.
- Forming two new ground divisions—one on the Soviet border and one near Bucharest—and a new mountain infantry brigade.

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The Pact's military structure until the late 1970s was neither prepared nor authorized to control national forces in peacetime. The Headquarters of the Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, a virtual adjunct of the Soviet General Staff, was created in 1969 to oversee and coordinate the development of allied military forces. The role of its representatives in the defense ministries in Pact countries—always Soviet officers—varied widely. [REDACTED]

In the late 1970s the Soviets secured the subordination of the Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) forces to their own command in wartime.² Accordingly the peacetime structure of the Pact was reorganized to bring it more in accordance with the wartime structure:

- The Staff of the Combined Armed Forces was restructured to allow wartime creation of staffs for the Western and Southwestern Theaters of Military Operations (TMO) from it. This structure parallels that of the Soviet General Staff.
- The Staff's authority over training in the national forces was increased.
- New stages of readiness were introduced that permitted the Pact commands to assume control of national forces automatically at intermediate stages of alert.
- East European forces down to regimental level were integrated into a Soviet-controlled automated alerting system.
- Pact procedures to create commands for the Western and Southwestern TMOs in peacetime were promulgated. [REDACTED]

The Romanians firmly resisted these proposals. Ceausescu's public denouncement in December 1978 of the Soviet proposal for peacetime commands in the TMOs was the most blatant, but not the only, example of Romania's opposition. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] throughout this period the Romanians demanded command positions for NSWP officers, particularly their own, on joint staffs and argued that the Soviet proposals compromised the sovereignty of the NSWP countries. [REDACTED]

Although Romania's opposition embarrassed the Soviets, the rest of the Pact ultimately accepted the Soviet proposals. The Romanians, however, refused to accept any of these proposals and have refused to participate in any command or procedures based on these agreements. [REDACTED]

Since then the Romanians have made concerted efforts to isolate their forces from Soviet supervision and control. They:

- Did not consult the Soviets in advance of the reorganization of the Romanian ground forces in 1980.

- Have refused requests to conduct joint planning for the Combined Black Sea Fleet Command. [REDACTED]

Recent Relations

Neither the crisis in the Romanian domestic economy nor Andropov's accession to the top Soviet leadership post has caused Romania to be more accommodating to the Soviets. If anything, Romania's relations with the Soviets are more strained now than they have been for many years. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Ceausescu has continued his opposition to the Soviets in recent meetings of Pact leaders. While resisting Soviet proposals to increase military spending and to

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denounce NATO, Ceausescu has presented his own proposals, which reflect Romania's concern for economic problems rather than military security. During a meeting of Pact leaders in Prague in January 1983, Ceausescu proposed a unilateral freeze on military spending by Pact members and a gradual reduction by 15 to 20 percent by 1985. He also proposed a Pact initiative for negotiations with NATO to reduce conventional as well as nuclear arms in Europe. []

[]

Soviet forces. []

[] the Bulgarian front at that time consisted of two 25X1

Bulgarian armies and a Romanian army stationed in 25X1

eastern Romania. The third Bulgarian army and the 25X1

second Romanian army were to be deployed to the 25X1

Yugoslav border to protect the Pact's western flanks 25X1

in the Balkans. [] Romanian units 25X1

would be attached to the Soviet Odessa Front. [] 25X1

[] a Romanian army might also 25X1

invade Greece. [] 25X1

Pact and Romanian Strategies

[]

Concern over the reliability of the Romanians appar- 25X1

ently caused Pact planners to change the composition 25X1

of these fronts. [] 25X1

[] 25X1

Questions about the reliability of Romanian forces complicate military planning within the Pact. To maintain the image of Pact unity, Pact exercises must include a role for Romanian ground forces; however, this role must not compromise the possibilities of success for other Pact forces. []

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Romania's ambiguous position also complicates planning for Romanian military officers. Since the early 1970s Romania has concentrated on developing capabilities for defense, not offense. []

[]

Pact Strategy

The Pact's primary military objective in the Balkans during a war with NATO would be to control naval access between the Mediterranean and Black Seas. To achieve this, Pact forces would invade Turkey to seize the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. The Pact's secondary aims would be to defeat or neutralize NATO forces in Greece and Turkey. []

Whatever the role of its ground forces, Romania's 25X1

location makes it critical to the success of any Pact 25X1

campaign in the Balkans. The transfer of one or two 25X1

Soviet fronts to Bulgaria along the Black Sea coast 25X1

would depend primarily on the Romanian transporta- 25X1

tion system. To address this problem, the Soviets have 25X1

proposed repeatedly the building of a Soviet-gauge 25X1

railroad across Romania to Bulgaria similar to the 25X1

Soviet railroad across southern Poland. The Roma- 25X1

nians have always refused. [] 25X1

Romania's prohibition against foreign troops crossing 25X1

its country in peacetime limits joint training by Soviet 25X1

and Bulgarian forces. The Romanians generally per- 25X1

mit Soviet officers to cross Romania for staff exer- 25X1

cises in Bulgaria; however, even these crossings are 25X1

closely supervised and controlled. [] 25X1

[]

Pact military planning in the early 1970s assigned Romanian forces the role of supporting Bulgarian and

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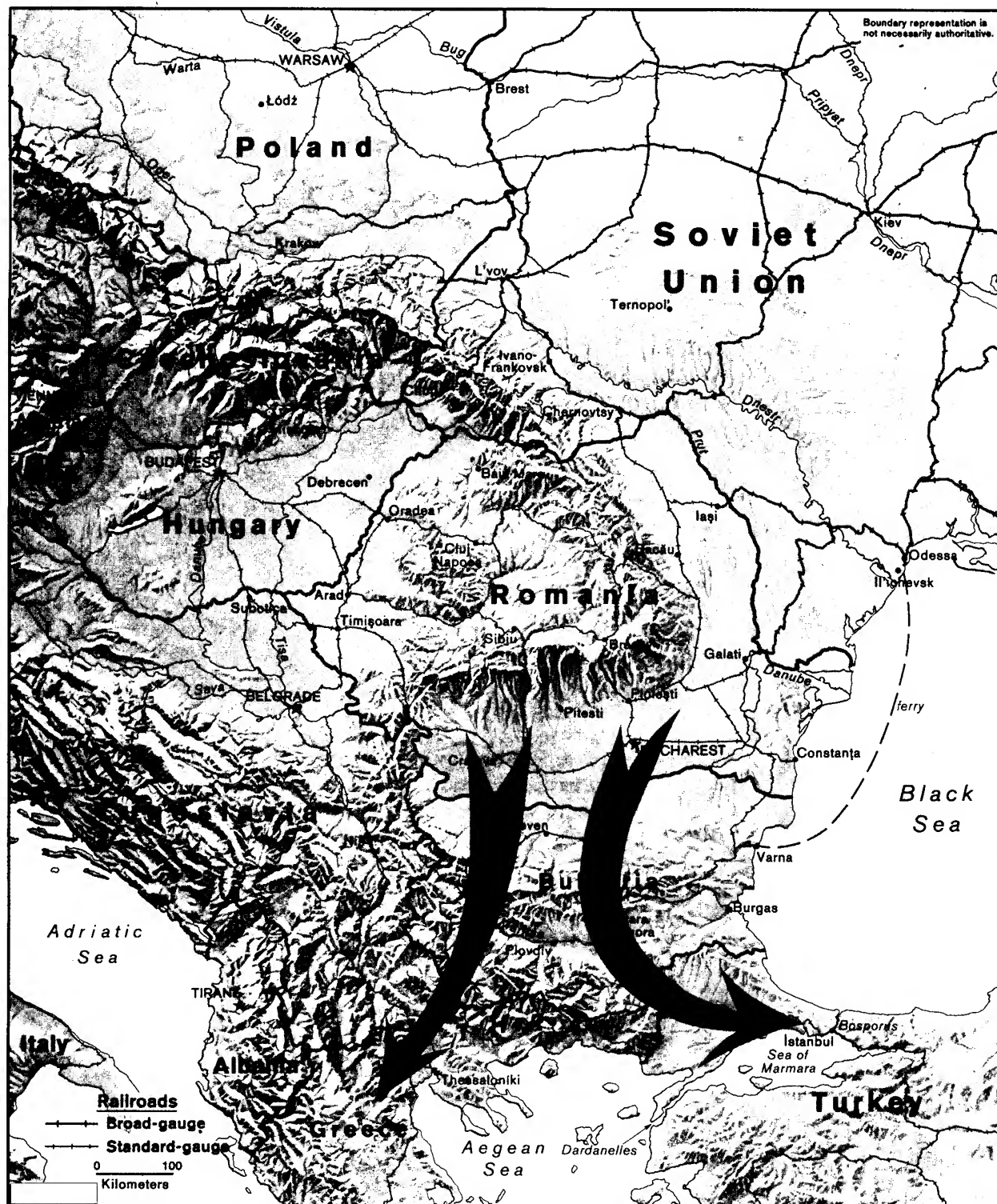
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Figure 1
Alternate Axes for Romanian Forces in Pact Exercises



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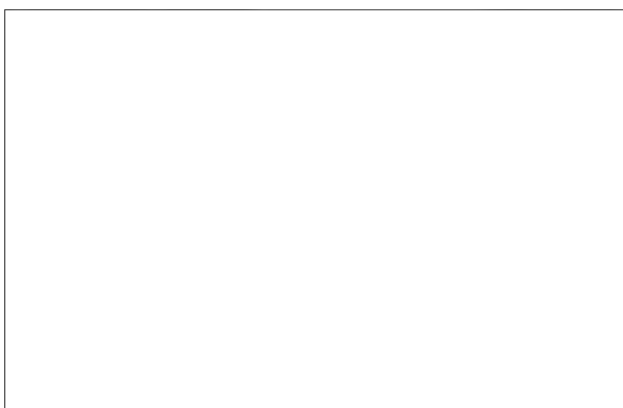
To overcome this obstacle, the Soviets inaugurated a direct ferry link with Bulgaria in the late 1970s. []

[] The ferry permits the Soviets to reinforce Bulgaria quickly but is inadequate to move major Soviet forces into the Balkans or to supply them during offensive operations.³ []

Pact Exercises

Pact exercises may be less reliable as a guide to Pact military planning for the Balkans than for any other region. To ensure Romania's participation in staff exercises, the Soviets apparently are willing to modify the scenarios to meet Romanian objections. For example, [] the Soviets changed the scenario of a major Pact staff exercise in 1980 because the Romanians refused to place their forces, even notionally, under a non-Romanian command. []

The context of Pact exercises also may distort our perceptions of Romania's role in a Pact campaign. Since the late 1970s, the Pact has required that all national exercises be conducted in the context of theater operations. The Romanians do not follow this rule, but the Soviets and Bulgarians do. As a result, Soviet and Bulgarian exercises often include vague descriptions of notional Romanian operations while executing their own. []



³ The Intelligence Community estimates that the six ferries currently operating between Ilichevsk and Varna have the combined capacity to carry two motorized rifle regiments. Each crossing, including time for loading and unloading, requires 29 hours one way or 58 hours round trip. []

Romanian Strategy

The Romanians are extremely circumspect in describing whom they expect to fight. Their exercises still include scenarios in which NATO forces invade Romania but also include attacks by their "northern neighbor," that is, by the Soviet Union. At the lower echelons they are occasionally more explicit. For example, according to one emigre, the political officer of his regiment always referred to the Soviet Union as Romania's main enemy. []

Romania's concern about the Soviets is a realistic assessment of the potential threat. None of the countries in the region except the Soviet Union is capable of invading Romania. Yugoslavia's poorly equipped forces are prepared for defensive operations. Neither Greece nor Turkey has modernized its military forces to any great extent in over a decade. As a result, both countries have shortages in the transport and logistics capabilities needed to sustain offensive operations in Romania. Similarly, Bulgaria and Hungary would require Soviet assistance to conduct more than limited military operations against Romania. []

Romania's national defense policy, "the defense of the nation by the entire population," is intended to deter any aggressor by demonstrating the nation's will and

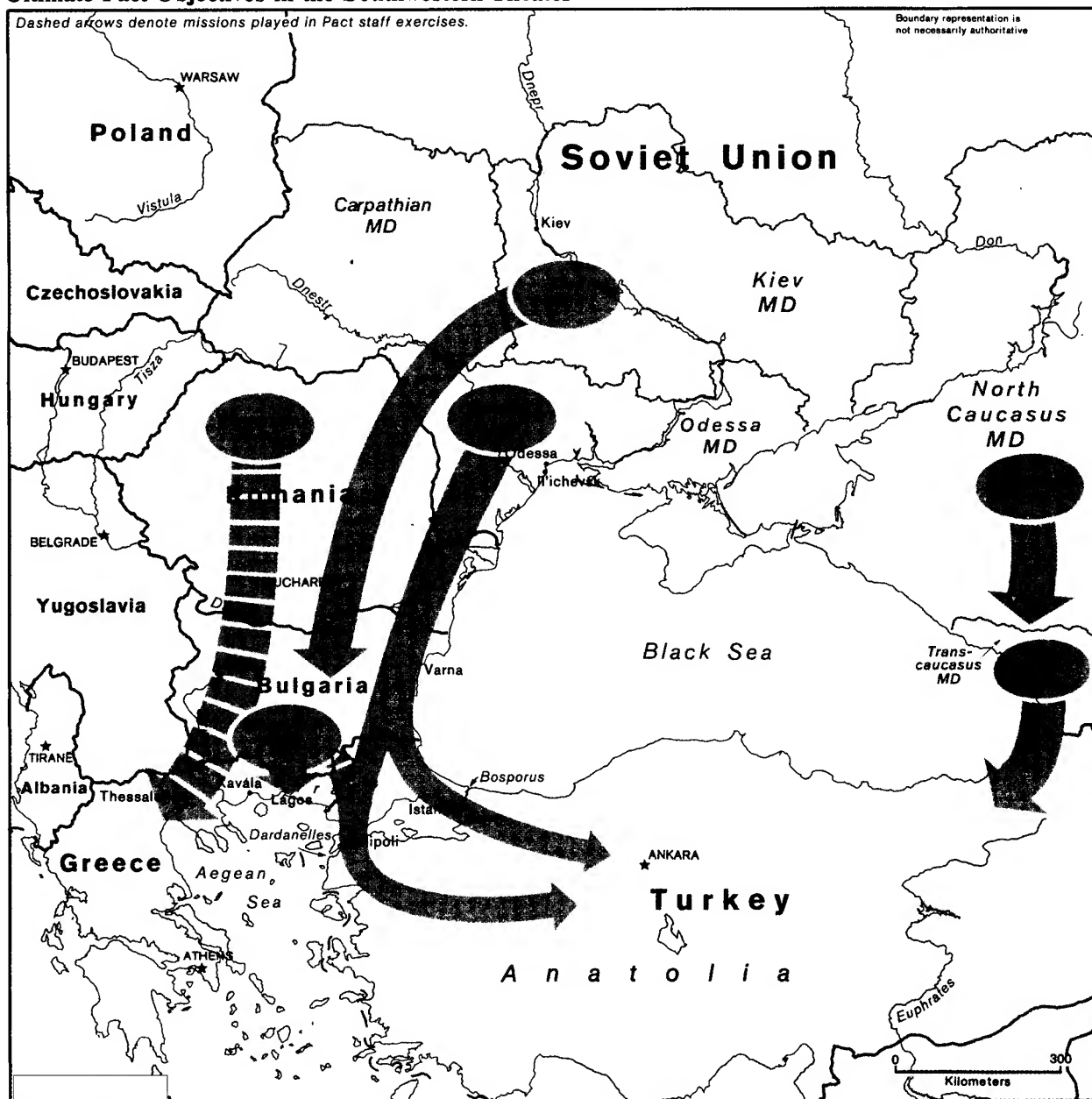
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Figure 2
Ultimate Pact Objectives in the Southwestern Theater



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capability to fight. The Romanians assume that any invader would be superior to their own forces and that conventional defensive operations would ultimately fail. To meet the threat, the Romanians have borrowed heavily from Yugoslav military doctrine and stress the use of mountainous terrain and guerrilla forces to continue resistance. [REDACTED]

The Romanians expect Patriotic Guards and paramilitary forces to play a major role in defensive operations. [REDACTED] they expect their ground units to be outnumbered in any engagement. Mobilizing Patriotic Guards units, however, could increase the size of Romanian ground units severalfold locally and reduce an enemy's advantage.

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Patriotic Guards units would release regular units from support functions and form additional infantry battalions. []

Romania would conduct resistance in stages to wear down an enemy while preserving its forces. Divisions would avoid decisive engagements; instead, they would conduct delaying operations along successive lines of defense and ultimately retreat into the mountains. As the divisions retreated, the Patriotic Guards units would remain behind to attack the enemy's lines of communication and to harass isolated units. []

The Romanian strategy requires that resistance be decentralized. The Romanians assume that any invader would seize Bucharest and the primary rail lines and roads. []

Romanian Exercises

The scenarios of Romania's own exercises, []

have been defensive since the mid-1970s. Exercises by other Pact countries typically begin with a notional NATO attack. After blunting the NATO advance, Pact forces usually counterattack and drive deep into NATO territory. Romanian exercises, on the other hand, always stop after the successful defense, and Romanian troops never move outside their own country. []

Command Structure

Since the Romanians formally adopted their Yugoslav-style defense strategy in 1972, the commands of their military, paramilitary, and Patriotic Guards forces have been reorganized to implement this new strategy. As a result, the command structure that emerged during the late 1970s, like the Romanian defense strategy, is unique within the Pact. []

In contrast to the rest of the Pact, the Romanian wartime command structure is decentralized. Romania's defense strategy calls for local resistance, to continue even if Bucharest and the national leadership are overrun at the outset of an invasion. To direct this local resistance the Romanians have strengthened intermediate levels of command and have vested county civil and military officials with more authority for defense than is common elsewhere in the Pact. []

National Commands

As President of Romania, Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP), and Commander in Chief of the Romanian Armed Forces, Nicolae Ceausescu ultimately controls all military, paramilitary, and Patriotic Guards forces in Romania. A National Defense Council, including the principal governmental, party, and military leaders, would be formed if Romania were invaded. It is not a permanent body in peacetime, however, and does not have responsibility for military policy or planning. Ceausescu is the designated President of the Defense Council. []

Governmental ministries and party organs exercise operational control of Romania's various forces in peacetime. Separate commands within the National Ministry of Defense control the naval, air, and air defense forces as well as the border guards and civil defense staffs. Romania does not have a separate command for ground forces; the General Staff controls these forces directly through four army commands. Within the Ministry of the Interior, a separate

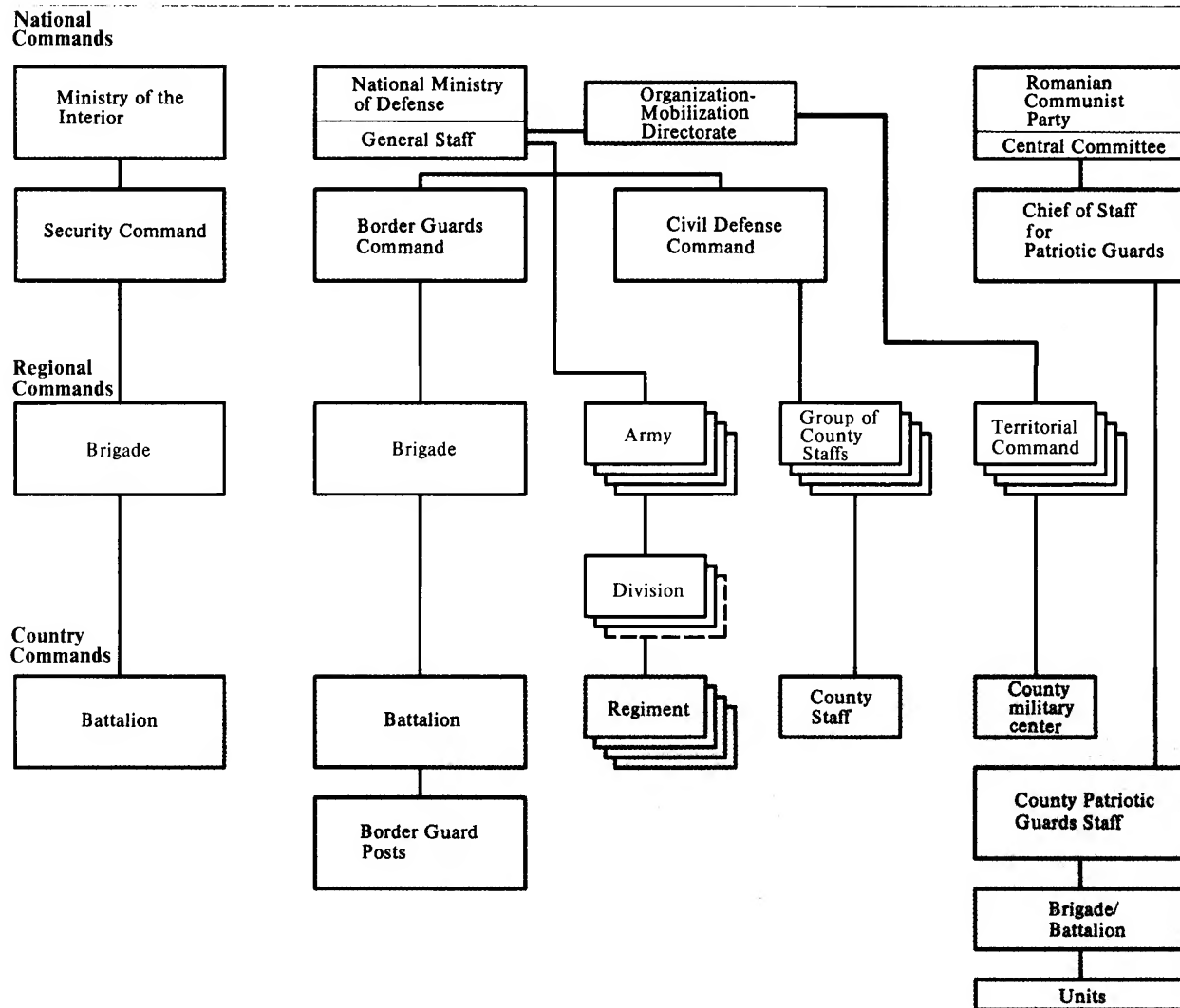
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Figure 3
Organization for National Defense



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command directs seven brigades of security troops. Finally, a chief of staff on the Central Committee of the RCP oversees the Patriotic Guards staffs in each of Romania's 40 counties and in the four districts of Bucharest (see figure 3).

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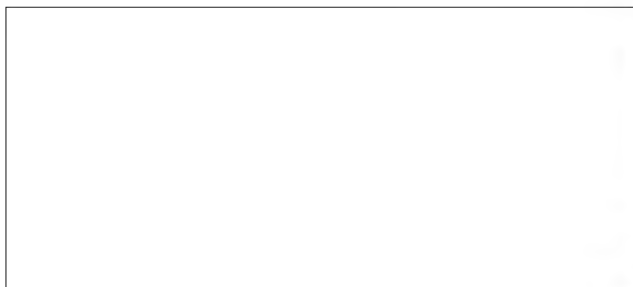
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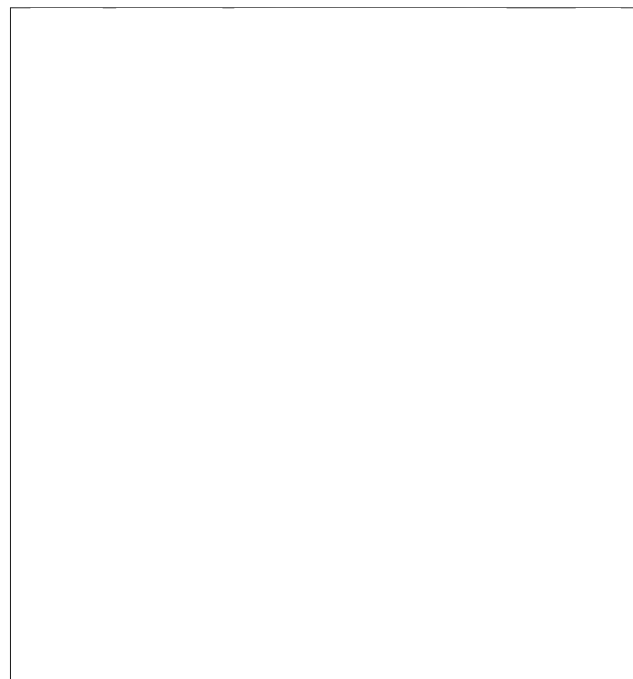
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Intermediate Commands

During the late 1970s the Romanians reorganized several components of the National Ministry of Defense to enhance the intermediate commands. These changes, which probably were intended to improve cooperation between the military and the Patriotic Guards, included:



A reshuffling of command personnel also accompanied these changes. The majority of military commanders and the department heads in the National Ministry of Defense have been appointed since 1980. To direct the emerging command structure, in March 1980 Lt. Gen. Constantin Olteanu was appointed as Minister of Defense and Col. Gen. Vasile Mileas as

* Among the other East European countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria are expected to form national fronts during a Pact war with NATO; East Germany and Hungary are expected to be part of joint Pact fronts.



From left to right: Ion Coman, former Minister of Defense, currently Party Secretary for Defense Affairs; Nicolas Ceausescu, President of Romania, Secretary General of the Romanian Communist Party, and Commander in Chief of the Romanian Armed Forces; Constantin Olteanu, Minister of Defense; Vasile Milea, Chief of Romanian General Staff.

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Figure 4. Romania's military and political leaders

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Chief of the Romanian General Staff (see figure 4). Ion Coman, the former Minister of Defense, assumed the position of Party Secretary for Defense Affairs.

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County Defense Councils

The county defense councils are critical to Romania's ability to implement its defense strategy. Unlike the National Defense Council, the county defense councils are permanent bodies responsible for military preparedness and civil defense in peacetime and for local defense in war. If Romania is invaded, the county defense councils are expected to reinforce and support military units operating in their territory with their own resources and, if overrun, to organize resistance behind enemy lines.

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Control of the county defense councils is firmly entrenched in the RCP. In their attempts to legitimize the national defense policy, the Romanians always emphasize the role of local Communists in inspiring and directing resistance against enemy forces in World War II. To ensure this role in the future, the First Secretary of the local committee of the party is the head of the council, and the local party committee controls the county's Patriotic Guards units. The

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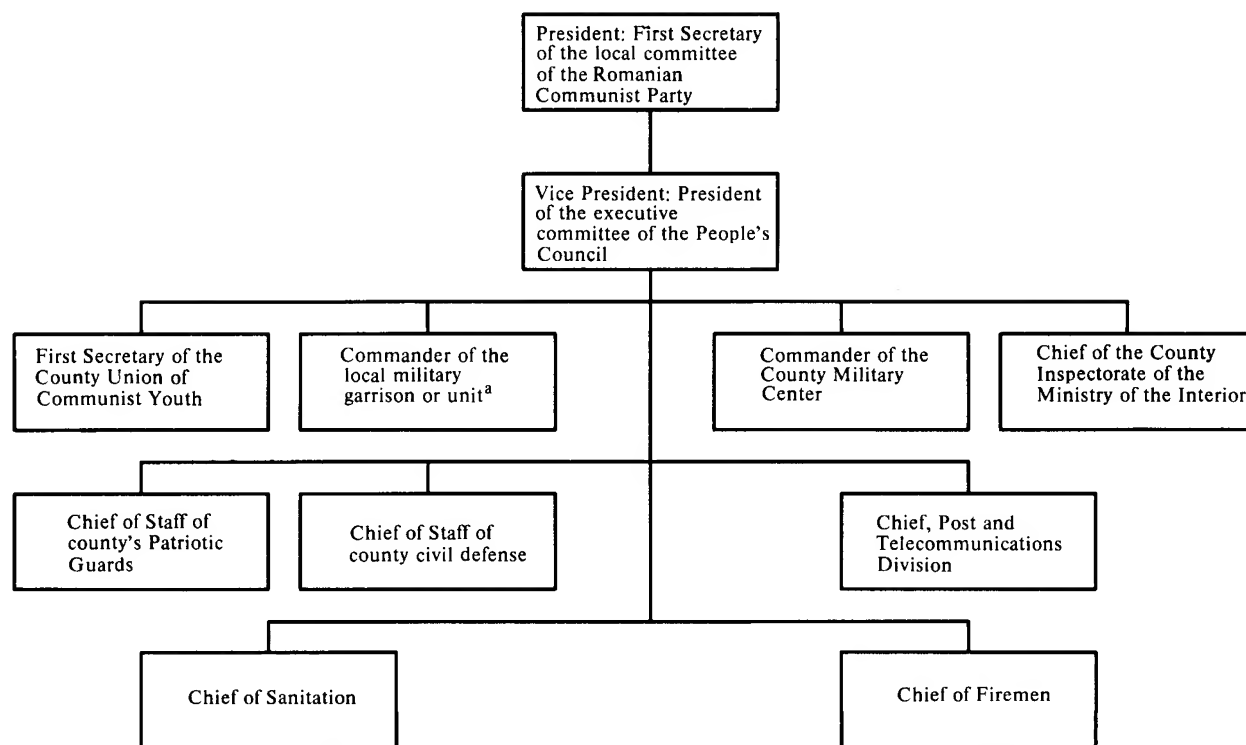
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Figure 5
Organization of the County Defense Council



^a Appointed by the Ministry of Defense.

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council also includes the President of the People's Council, that is, the county government, and the heads of the civil defense staff, the local security forces, and the county military center as well as critical government services. The commander of the local military unit is appointed to the council by the National Ministry of Defense (see figure 5).

Patriotic Guards

The Patriotic Guards would be the mainstay of any protracted resistance in Romania. The role of the Patriotic Guards has increased steadily over the past decade. These units are now expected to replace

ground units in less demanding missions, such as guarding lines of communication and military facilities, as well as conducting guerrilla warfare in areas overrun by enemy forces.

In line with the original concept of home defense, the Patriotic Guards are organized locally. Patriotic

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Guards units are formed in factories, which bear the costs of such units in peacetime. Membership in these units is nominally voluntary, but emigres report that employees, particularly reserve officers, are under considerable pressure to join. Most, if not all, of the Patriotic Guards have served in the Romanian armed forces. []

Patriotic Guards units are controlled by county staffs in peacetime but are supervised by the military.

Paramilitary Forces

Like the Patriotic Guards, the Border Guards and the Security Troops are expected to reinforce and support ground units during defense operations. In peacetime, the six brigades of Border Guards are distributed along Romania's frontier to control entry into the country; the seven brigades of security troops are stationed throughout the country—roughly one battalion per county—to preserve order and combat terrorism. Upon mobilization the Security Troops would be transferred to the National Ministry of Defense and would be subordinated to local military units. []

The paramilitary forces are expected to release active military units for combat and to maintain resistance behind enemy lines. The Border Guards are expected to provide the initial warning and defense against an invasion and to guard rear areas. The Security Troops are expected to assume a more active role. They would guard rear areas and lines of communication and, in areas overrun by the enemy, maintain resistance by assassinating collaborators and harassing enemy units. []

Organization and Equipment

The Romanian ground forces, like their East European counterparts, are organized essentially along

Soviet lines. Despite Romania's independent defense policy, it retained a centralized command structure through the 1970s until new concepts of decentralized command evolved. The changes that have occurred in the ground forces since 1979 indicate a slow divergence from the Soviet model. Romanian defense policy is based on the Yugoslav experience, and recent changes owe more to Yugoslav than Soviet practices. []

Reorganization

The command structure of the ground forces through the 1970s was inadequate to support Romania's defense strategy. The two former armies—the 2nd Army in Bucharest and the 3rd Army in Cluj—were organized to support a Pact campaign in the Balkans, not to control defensive operations by several divisions, possibly fighting on different axes, and Patriotic Guards units at the same time. The span of control, particularly for the 2nd Army with six divisions, was simply too great for the Romanians to control effectively. []

In April 1980 Romania formally replaced its two previous army commands with four new army commands []

The 4th Army was formed from the old 3rd Army and included most of its predecessor's subordinates. The

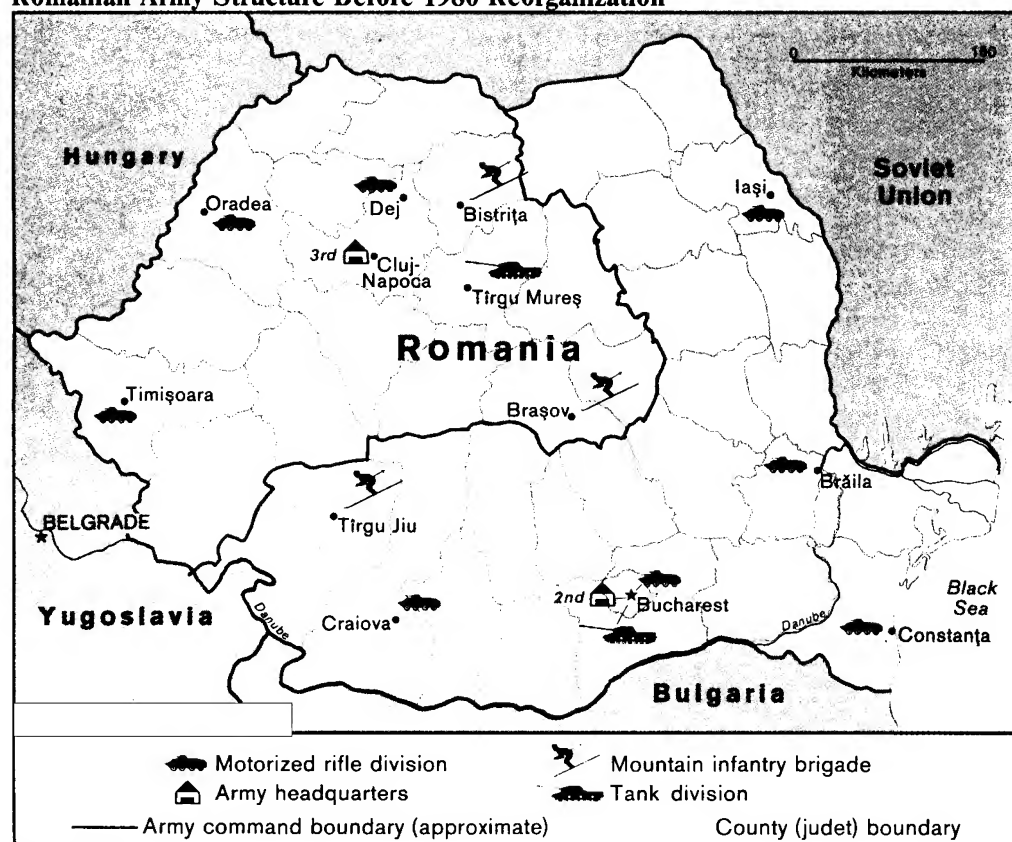
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Figure 6
Romanian Army Structure Before 1980 Reorganization



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other three armies were formed from the old 2nd Army's subordinates and one motorized rifle division from the old 3rd Army (see figures 6 and 7). The Romanians have formed several new nondivisional units since 1978 to support the new commands (see table 1), but considerable differences continue to exist in the capabilities of the four armies.

The new commands were created to improve cooperation between ground and Patriotic Guards units as well as to reduce the span of control. The Romanians undertook several measures during the reorganization to enhance this cooperation:

- County administrative boundaries were redrawn to match the new army areas.

- Officers having experience with the Patriotic Guards were appointed as commanders of the four new army commands.
- Equipment, particularly tanks and armored personnel carriers (APC), was redistributed to balance the capabilities of the 10 ground divisions.

While the reorganization improved Romania's defensive capabilities, it complicated Romania's ability to participate in a Pact campaign. The old 2nd Army, which had been assigned as a reserve for the Bulgarian front, was now split into three separate commands. Any attempt to use the three armies to perform the original mission or to reconstitute the old 2nd Army would require lengthy planning and preparations.

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Figure 7
Romanian Army Structure After 1980 Reorganization



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Table 1
Major Romanian Ground Forces, 1983

Number of units

	Ground Armies				Ministry of Defense	Total	Ground Forces Formed Since 1978
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th			
Divisions							
Motorized rifle	1	3	2	2	0	8	
Tank	1	0	0	1	0	2	
Nondivisional							
Scud brigade	0	1	0	1	0	2	
Artillery brigade	0	1	0	1	1	3	
Artillery regiment	1	2	1	1	0	5	2
Antitank regiment	1	2	1	2	0	6	2
SA-6 regiment	1	1	1	0	0	3	2
AAA brigade	0	0	1	1	0	2	
AAA regiment	1	1	0	0	0	2	
Mountain infantry brigade	1	1	1	1	0	4	2
Airborne regiments	1	1	1	1	0	4	3

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The implications of the reorganization for the Pact were apparent immediately to Romania's allies. In addition, Romania had not notified the Pact of its plans as required. [REDACTED]

the Soviet Union and Bulgaria quickly demanded explanations for the reorganization, particularly for the new army commands on their borders. [REDACTED]

is no indication that the Soviets have offered to provide weapons to Romania on favorable terms. [REDACTED]

Romanian-produced weapons are based on foreign, chiefly Soviet, designs, and the degree and success of their modifications vary considerably. For example, Romanian copies of Soviet armored personnel carriers have West German-designed engines that perform better than the original Soviet-designed engines. Similarly, their adaptations of the T-55 tank, the TR-77 and TR-800, include more sophisticated fire-control systems, including laser range finders. The new Romanian self-propelled air defense system, on the other hand, is simply a 1950s-vintage anti-aircraft machine-gun mounted on a truck. [REDACTED]

The recent economic crisis in Romania has had a major impact on the acquisition of new weapons. To acquire hard currency and to reduce costs, the Romanians try to sell their weapons abroad, and such sales apparently have priority over their own units. For example, emigres report that Romania sells virtually all of the TAB-77 APCs produced to its Pact allies. The most dramatic example of this priority was the recent sale of virtually all of Romania's TR-77 tanks to Egypt. [REDACTED]

four Romanian divisions equipped with these tanks were reequipped with obsolete T-34 tanks by mid-1983. Even if this sale accelerates the production of TR-800 tanks, Romania will not make up the loss until the end of this decade. [REDACTED]

Domestic production may be a mixed blessing in the long term, because most of these weapons are based on old designs. Even with Romanian modifications, the relative quality of these weapons is lower than new weapons being introduced in other Pact ground forces. Recent improvements in Romanian ground divisions, therefore, have been largely the result of adding more rather than better weapons. Moreover, the new weapons have not corrected some of the major deficiencies in Romanian units. For example, the artillery in Romanian divisions has less range than that in Soviet divisions. [REDACTED]

The capabilities of the four armies vary according to the immediate threat and the availability of other forces. The more powerful 2nd and 4th Armies, each with three divisions, cover Romania's borders with the Soviet Union and Hungary. The 1st and 3rd Armies each have two divisions. The capabilities of the 1st Army, which protects the capital and most of the Bulgarian border, are weak, but this weakness is offset somewhat because most of the Romanian Air Force is based in its area. The 3rd Army, which covers the Yugoslav border, is the weakest of the four armies, but the Romanians do not regard the Yugoslavs as a threat. [REDACTED]

Military Production

The development of Romania's defense industries during the 1970s probably determined the timing of changes in Romanian ground units. Romania has reduced its dependence on its Pact allies for military equipment and now ranks third after Poland and Czechoslovakia in military production among the East European countries. It continued to buy military equipment from its allies through the 1970s, but these acquisitions shifted increasingly from basic weapons, such as artillery and tanks, to more sophisticated equipment, such as surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and radars. [REDACTED] the Soviets have pressed the Romanians repeatedly since the late 1970s to improve their military capabilities, but there

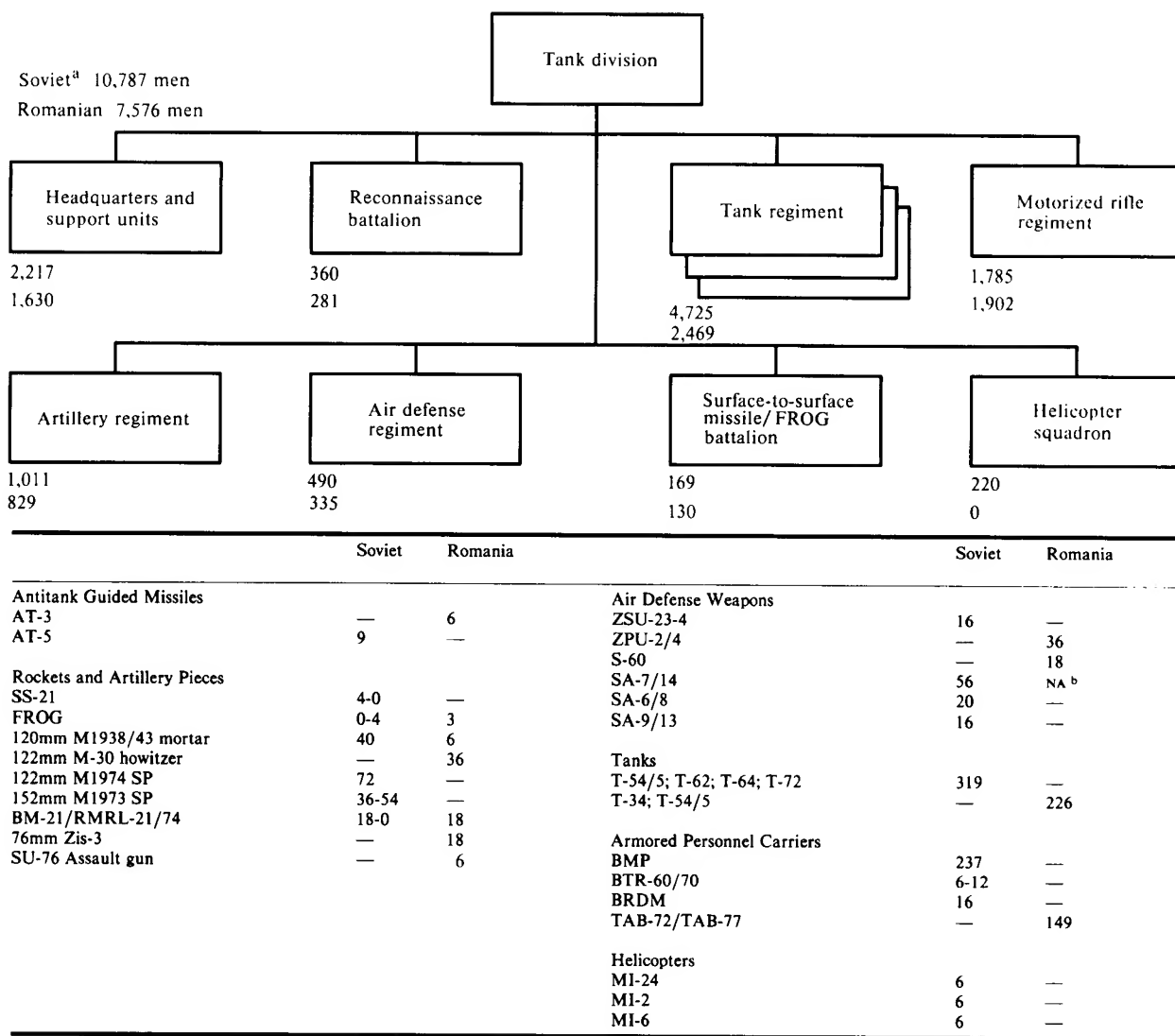
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Figure 8
Table of Organization for Soviet and Romanian Tank Divisions



^a Soviet tank divisions in Eastern Europe.

^b Data not available.

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The Romanians may be planning to produce more sophisticated weapons by the end of the decade.

several new weapon

systems based on pirated Western technology were expected to enter production in 1985-90. These systems, which include SAMs and antitank guided missiles (ATGM), would correct some of the most critical

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weaknesses of Romanian ground units. In the past, however, Romanian production plans usually have slipped several years. The current freeze on military spending probably will delay widespread deployment of these systems. []

- The artillery battalions in Romanian MRRs are equipped with 76-mm antitank guns, which have far less range than the artillery typically found in Warsaw Pact MRRs. Until recently, artillery support in Romanian MRRs was limited to a battery of 120-mm mortars. []

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Ground Divisions

Romania's 10 ground divisions are still organized along Soviet lines. These divisions, however, are roughly 25 to 30 percent smaller than their Soviet counterparts. The US Intelligence Community assesses a Romanian motorized rifle division to have 11,000 personnel compared with 13,000 in a Soviet motorized rifle division. Similarly, a Romanian tank division is assessed to have at least 8,000 personnel compared with 11,000 in a Soviet tank division. []

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Past shortages of equipment probably caused the Romanians to create small divisions and to use quantities of older and less effective equipment (see figures 8 and 9). A comparison of the tables of organization and equipment (TOE) of Soviet and Romanian divisions indicates that:

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- Unlike Soviet motorized rifle divisions, Romanian motorized rifle divisions do not have multiple rocket launcher (MRL) battalions.⁵
- Romanian motorized rifle divisions have chemical defense companies, whereas Soviet divisions have battalions.
- Only the motorized rifle regiments (MRR) in Romania's two tank divisions are fully equipped with APCs; MRRs in Romanian motorized rifle divisions usually have one or more battalions equipped with trucks.⁶
- Romanian tank regiments do not have motorized infantry battalions (MRB) as do Soviet tank regiments.
- Romanian tank battalions have two companies instead of three in Soviet tank battalions.

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The Romanians may have tried to compensate for some of their weapon shortcomings with organizational changes. [] Romanian officers in the mid-1970s proposed forming special, highly mobile antitank units. During the reorganization, SU-100 self-propelled assault guns, formerly used in divisional antitank regiments, were attached to the tank regiments of seven of Romania's eight motorized rifle divisions. The only motorized rifle division that has not adopted this structure, the 67th, is also the only Romanian division to acquire the new antitank gun. []

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Effectiveness of Ground Divisions

Unlike Soviet divisions, there is very little difference in capability among Romanian ground divisions. At the outset of the reorganization, the Romanians redistributed equipment, primarily APCs and tanks, among the 10 divisions to balance their capabilities. To some extent the redistribution reflected different requirements for regional defense. For example, the 9th Motorized Rifle Division had more TR-77 tanks than any other division; however, it ranked sixth in APCs. []

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⁵ One division, the 1st Motorized Rifle Division, has formed a separate MRL battalion; as domestic production of MRLs increases, other divisions probably will form similar battalions. []

⁶ Romania may be reorganizing its MRRs with two battalions of APCs and one battalion of trucks. []

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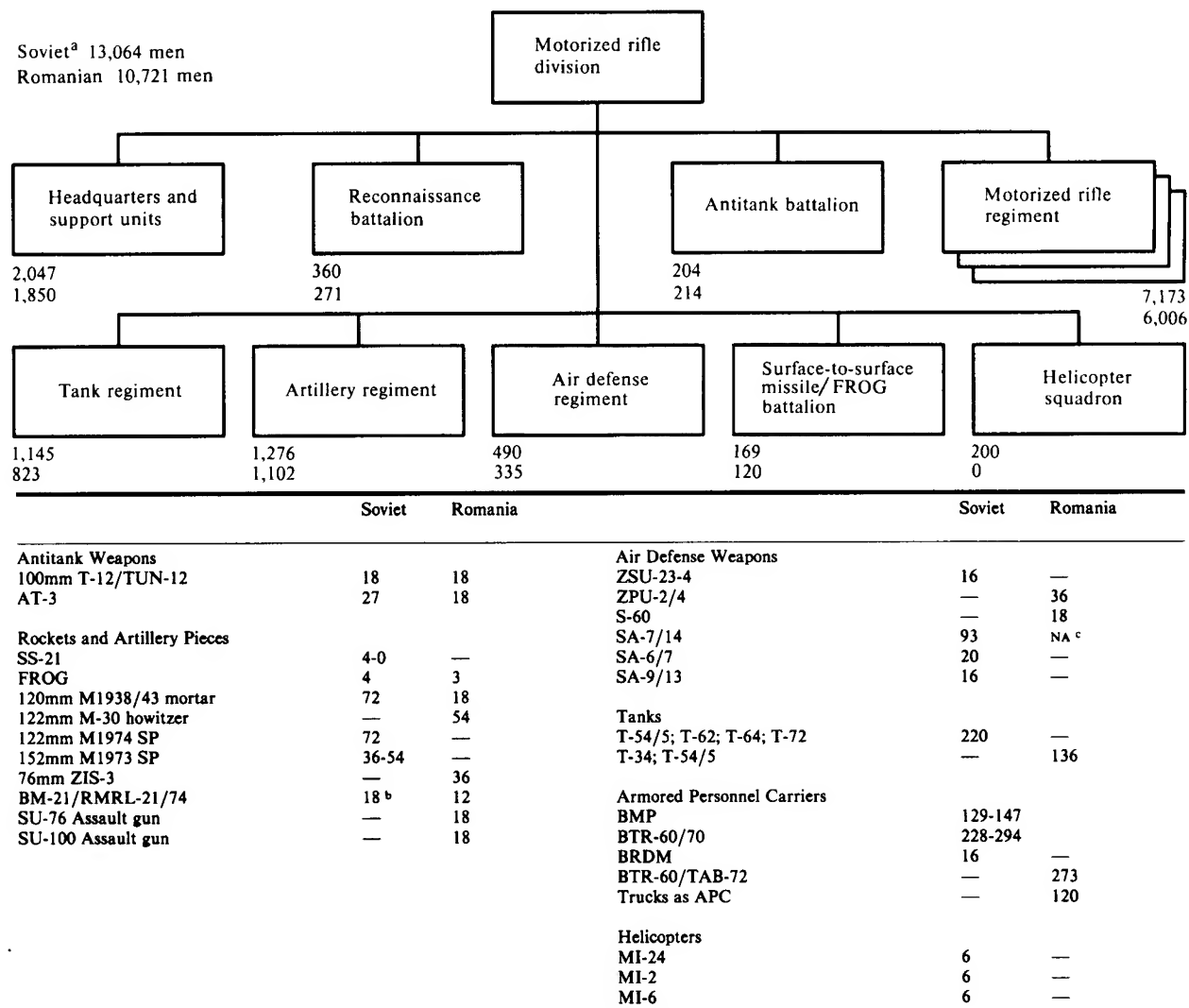
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Figure 9

Table of Organization for Soviet and Romanian Motorized Rifle Divisions

^a Soviet motorized rifle division in Eastern Europe.^b Soviet divisions equipped with 18 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers have 36 M1973 self-propelled guns; units not equipped with BM-21s have 54 M1973 self-propelled guns.^c Data not available.

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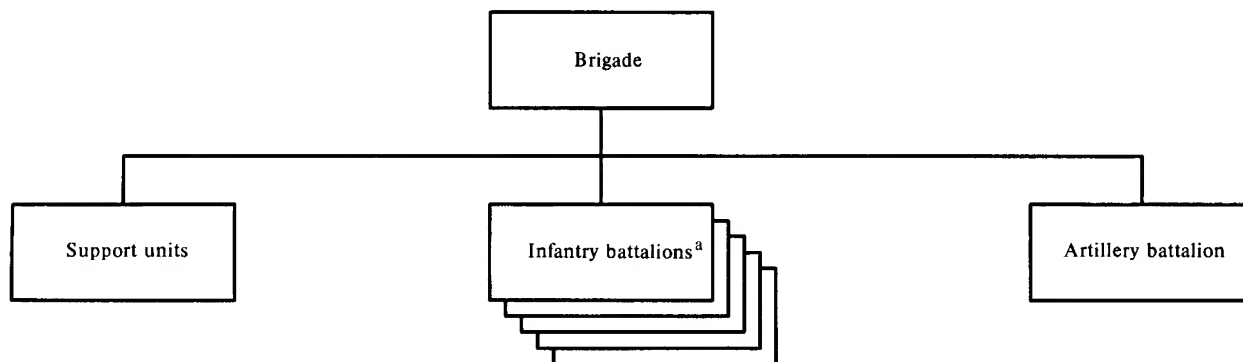
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Figure 10
Organization of a Mountain Infantry Brigade



^a Only the Second Mountain Infantry Brigade has five infantry battalions.

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Like most East European divisions, Romanian divisions are less effective than the Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe.⁷ The capabilities of Soviet divisions vary widely, but the most powerful Soviet divisions are stationed in Eastern Europe. For offensive operations, the Romanian divisions would be roughly half

as powerful as these divisions.⁸ The divisions in the interior of the Soviet Union generally are equipped with older weapons, are manned at lower levels in peacetime, and conduct less training than their counterparts in Eastern Europe. In terms of potential effectiveness, the Romanian divisions are roughly equivalent to the weaker cadre divisions in the Odessa Military District, which borders Romania on the east.

⁷ The Soviets categorize their ground divisions as "ready" or "not-ready," based on the quantity and quality of equipment as well as the peacetime levels of manning and training. Each of these categories is subdivided informally into three types of divisions.

⁸ Estimates of the relative capabilities of Pact divisions were made by applying weighted equipment values (WEV) to the inventory of each Soviet division for 1982 as contained in the Land Armaments and Manpower Model. As used in this study, WEVs are intended only to provide a rough means of comparison between ground units. This methodology, developed by the US Army, assigns scores to weapons and combat vehicles on the basis of engineering analyses of mobility, firepower, and armor protection and weights the scores for each type of equipment according to its relative impact on a unit's capabilities for offensive operations.

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Mountain Infantry Brigades

The four mountain infantry brigades, the only dedicated mountain troops in the Pact, are expected to perform critical defensive missions. Romania's mountainous terrain increases the impact of small, lightly armed units against larger and better equipped enemy forces. As a result, the Romanians have assigned these units, the elite of the Romanian ground forces, to hold strategic mountain passes against the advance of enemy forces. []

Mountain infantry battalions, according to emigres, are organized and equipped for specific missions and are expected to operate independently. Emigres report that a mountain infantry battalion might have up to 500 personnel after mobilization. The principal variation in weapons among battalions is in artillery. Most battalions have one or two batteries of 120-mm mortars; however, a few battalions also have a battery of 76-mm mountain guns (see figure 10). []

Patriotic Guards

Organization and equipment vary widely among Patriotic Guards units. [] the Patriotic Guards would be organized into battalions and brigades if Romania were invaded; however, emigres report that the size of the unit in peacetime depends on the size of the factory, and company-size units are typical. The US Intelligence Community estimates that, if invaded, Romania probably could mobilize 500,000 to 700,000 Patriotic Guards. Each county, therefore, could probably form several brigades. []

The Romanians have made major efforts in recent years to improve the weapons available to the Patriotic Guards. According to emigres, Patriotic Guards units were armed with World War II-vintage small arms in the mid-1970s. In parades in recent years, however, Patriotic Guards were always armed with modern small arms. []

Logistics

Logistic deficiencies also restrict Romania's capabilities. The US Intelligence Community credits Romania with sufficient peacetime stores to support military operations for one month or less. []

[] local authorities are responsible for supplying units during defensive operations; however, these procedures are not intended to support Pact offensive operations. []

Prospects for Improvement

The most likely changes over the next several years probably will be in the organization of ground units. [] Romanian officers were considering further reducing the size of divisions in the mid-1970s. A change in the organization of units probably would involve splitting some divisions into brigades and forming other brigades by reinforcing some regiments. []

Romania's two tank divisions are the most likely candidates for such a reorganization. According to US defense attaches, there have been persistent rumors to this effect since the late 1970s. If reorganized, these two divisions could provide one tank brigade for each army. [] There is, however, no evidence that the reorganization is taking place in either tank division yet. The sale of Romania's TR-77 tanks probably will delay any plans for such a reorganization for several years. []

A reorganization apparently is already under way in two motorized rifle divisions in southern Romania. [] two regiments—one motorized rifle regiment in the 3rd Army and one tank regiment in the 1st Army—have been expanded beyond the size of their counterparts elsewhere in Romania. Moreover, the increase in the number and types of weapons and in the types of subunits in these regiments reflects organizational patterns typical of Yugoslav brigades rather than Romanian regiments (see figure 11). []

The Romanians will continue to field new weapons, but the rate of deployment probably will depend on the state of the economy. The most likely improvements over the rest of this decade include:

- Introducing TR-800 tanks.
- Replacing trucks with APCs in motorized rifle regiments.
- Introducing a new Romanian-designed infantry fighting vehicle, the P224.
- Equipping antitank units with TUN-12 antitank guns.
- Forming multiple rocket launcher battalions in all ground divisions.

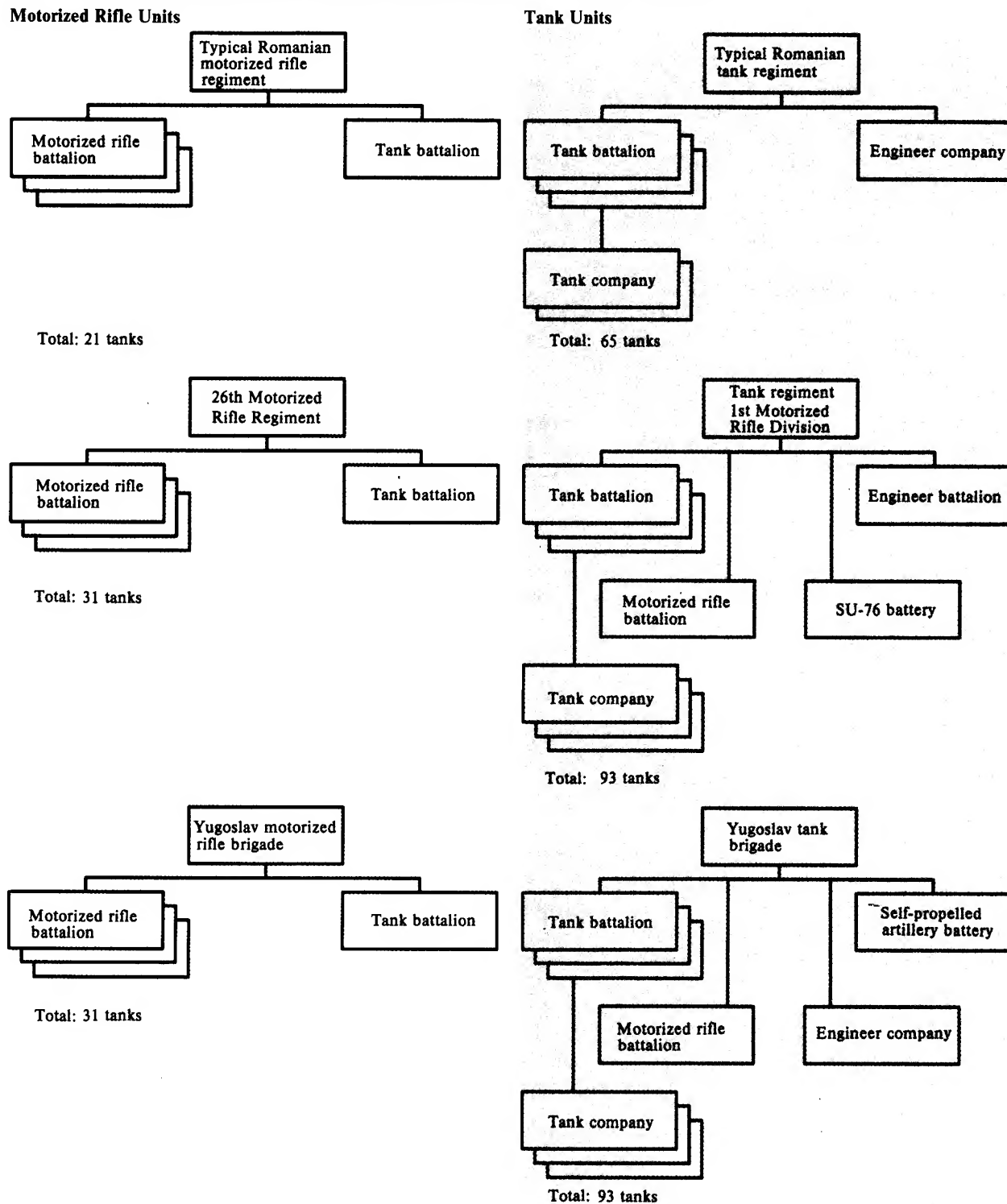
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Figure 11
Comparative Organizations: Romanian Regiments and Yugoslav Brigades



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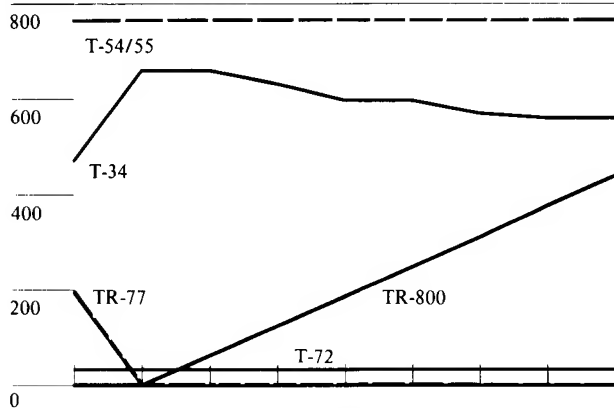
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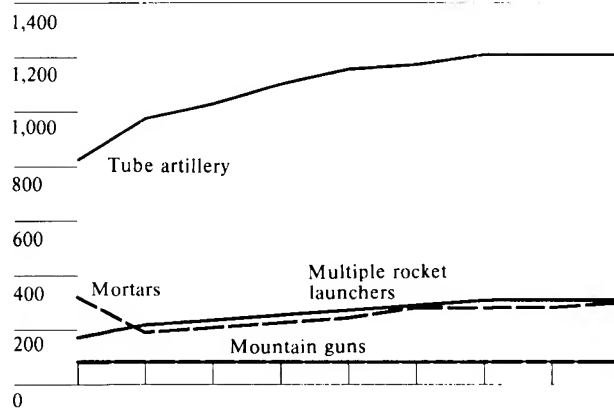
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Figure 12
Deployment of Equipment, 1982-90

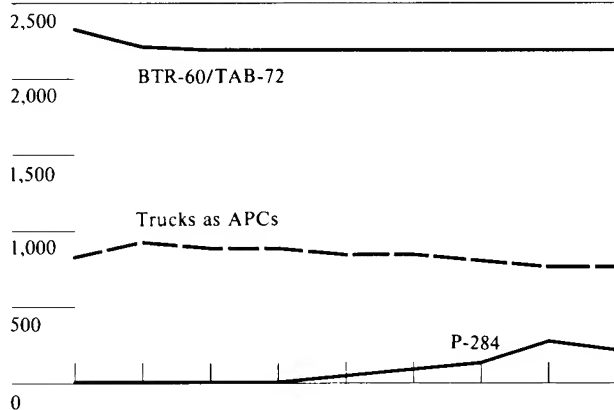
Romanian Tank Trends



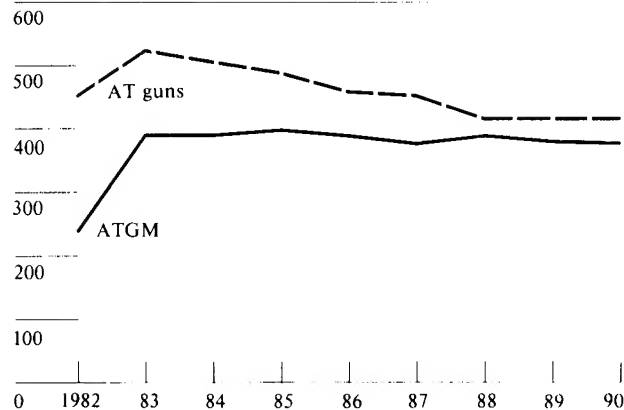
Fire Support



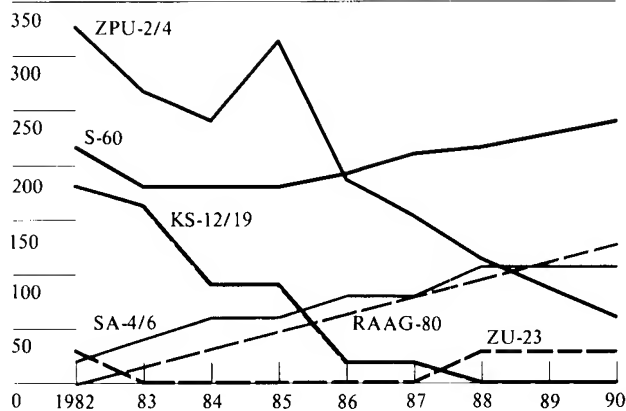
Armored Personnel Carriers or Infantry Fighting Vehicles



Antitank Weapons



Air Defense Weapons



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- Introducing Romanian-produced D-30 field guns to replace 76-mm ZIS-3 guns in motorized rifle regiments.
- Introducing M-1979 multiple rocket launchers and D-30 field guns into nondivisional artillery units.
- Forming an SA-6 regiment for the 4th Army.

The recent and projected deployments of new equipment will have a major impact on Romania's military capabilities by the end of the decade. Figure 12 presents the Intelligence Community's projections of the introduction of new weapons in the Romanian ground forces during 1982-90. If economic conditions do not delay these programs, the additional weapons would represent a 13.4-percent increase in the potential combat effectiveness of Romanian ground forces by 1990.

Despite the introduction of new weapons, Romania will continue to lag the rest of the Pact. Romanian divisions in 1990 probably will be comparable to Soviet divisions in the early 1970s or to the better East European divisions in the late 1970s. Because the rest of the Pact has introduced new generations of weapons and increased the numbers of weapons in ground units, the capabilities of Romanian ground units may actually decline relative to other Pact units during this period.

Readiness and Training

Readiness

Manning Practices. Romanian ground forces are maintained at relatively high readiness in peacetime. In the Land Armament and Manpower Model (LAMM), the US Intelligence Community assesses five of Romania's 10 divisions as manned at 75 to 85 percent in peacetime and the remaining five as manned at 55 to 65 percent (see table 2), levels comparable to the ready divisions in the western USSR. Manpower is not distributed equally within these divisions but is concentrated in the combat elements of the motorized rifle regiment and tank regiment. Emigres report that many nondivisional units and support elements within divisions are manned at less than 50 percent in peacetime.

Table 2

Ground Divisions by Manning Category

	True Division Designator	Head-quarters	Army
Category I (75 to 85 percent)	1st Motorized Rifle	Bucharest	1st
	9th Motorized Rifle	Constanta	2nd
	18th Motorized Rifle	Timisoara	3rd
	11th Motorized Rifle	Oradea	4th
	6th Tank	Turda Mures	4th
Category II (55 to 65 percent)	57th Tank	Bucharest	1st
	10th Motorized Rifle	Iasi	2nd
	67th Motorized Rifle	Braila	2nd
	2nd Motorized Rifle	Craiova	3rd
	81st Motorized Rifle	Dej	4th

These manning practices should enable Romania to mobilize quickly in a crisis. Like ready units throughout the Pact, Romanian units do not depend on reservists to remove equipment from storage and to deploy to assembly areas. Even during mobilization, most Romanian units should be able to call up reservists and complete preparations within 10 days to two weeks.

Reserve Training. Romanian conscripts serve 16 months, the shortest period of active duty in the Pact. The massive turnovers in personnel reduce the need for reserve training. Because of high levels of peacetime manning and frequent turnovers in personnel, Romanian motorized rifle regiments and tank regiments probably can mobilize with reservists who have served on active duty within the last year. Even the nondivisional units and divisional support elements probably can be filled out with reservists who were released within the last two years.

The reduced need for reserve training is reflected in the actual experiences of Romanian reservists. Despite stringent legal obligations—Romanian reservists

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are theoretically liable for three months of active-duty training each year—reserve training is rarely conducted in units. In contrast to emigres from other Pact countries, Romanian emigres rarely report being called up for reserve duty or seeing reservists in their units while on active duty. []

Reserve Officers. Reserve officers have little, if any, role in Romanian ground units in peacetime. The Romanians do train reserve officers, but their role is limited to mobilization assignments in active units and to positions in Patriotic Guards units. []

Training for Romanian reserve officers is conducted in two phases. Candidates for commissions are trained in special reduced-term units for six months before entering a university or technical institute. They receive regular military training during their studies and after graduation can be called up for a brief period of active duty. Emigres who have had this training, however, report that reserve officers, if called up, rarely serve for more than a few weeks. They may also be called up subsequently for three-month training courses in military schools. [] this usually involves only a few hundred reserve officers each year. []

Training

The Romanians train their conscripts and units to implement their national defense policy, not Pact offensive doctrine. The short term of active service, the massive turnover in units every eight months, and constraints on training distinguish military training in Romania from other Pact countries. []

Unit Training. Training is a major determinant of readiness in each Pact unit. []

[] the Pact's training program is intended to prepare units for offensive operations. To complete this program, units proceed systematically from training in individual military skills through division field exercises. []

The ability of units to complete the training program depends on peacetime manning. Soviet ready divisions complete the program annually; their not-ready divisions, on the other hand, complete only part of the program each year and are considered fit only for

Table 3
Troop Rotation in Pact Ground Units

Country	Induction Cycle	New Recruits as Percent of Total
USSR	Every six months	25
Poland		
Czechoslovakia		
Bulgaria		
East Germany	Every six months	33
Hungary		
Romania	Every eight months	50

defensive operations in an emergency. The Soviets typically mobilize their not-ready divisions once every five years to conduct division field exercises. []

The short term of active duty and the massive turnover in personnel every eight months distorts training in Romanian units in comparison with other Pact units. Romanian ground units will have a much higher proportion of new, untrained conscripts than other units in the Pact (see table 3).⁹ Moreover, most of the NCOs in these units are conscripts who only serve eight months as instructors. As a result, Romanian commanders must devote a disproportionate amount of time teaching basic military skills and practicing small-unit tactics. Romania's attempts to grapple with this problem have produced a unique training program. []

[] Romania's divisional training program bears only superficial resemblance to the Pact's program. The Soviets usually require one

⁹ The Romanians may reduce the impact of these dramatic fluctuations in readiness in units by staggering troop rotations within divisions. The evidence is tenuous; however, by comparing reports by emigres who have served in different regiments in the same divisions, some of the regiments appear to be out of cycle. If this is the case, this practice would reduce the dramatic change in readiness within the division as a whole. []

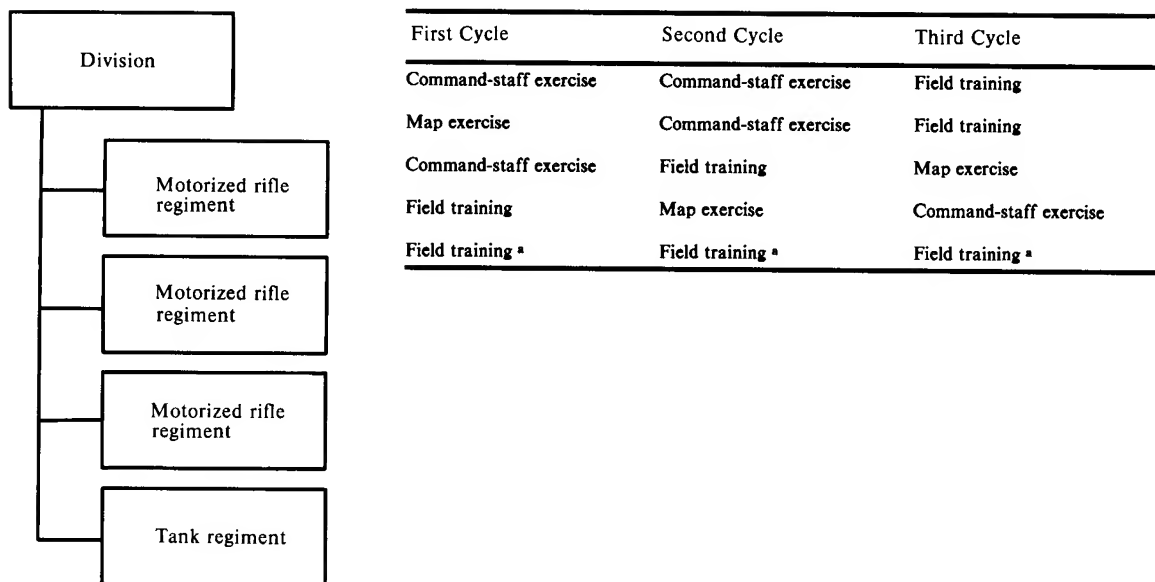
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Figure 13
Training in Romanian Motorized Rifle Divisions



* Tank regiments conduct field training in every cycle; however, this training may be limited to qualification tests and battalion exercises in some cycles.

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year to complete a full division training program; the Romanians expect to achieve similar levels of training only every two years, and even this goal is not accomplished. The expense of large-scale exercises and the use of conscripts in the civilian economy has caused a decline in division-level training.

the motorized rifle regiments over the two-year program. For example, one of these regiments may conduct a field exercise in the first cycle, a command-staff exercise in the second cycle, and a map exercise in the third cycle (see figure 13). Subordinate motorized rifle battalions conduct field training in two of the three cycles.

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Training within Romanian divisions also differs markedly from training in other Pact divisions. Except in Romania, each of the three motorized rifle regiments in most Pact ready motorized rifle divisions conducts the same training and completes a full regimental training program every six months. Training in Romanian motorized rifle divisions is staggered among

This program seriously reduces training for each Romanian conscript relative to his Pact counterparts. The average conscript in a Pact ready unit will complete the training program several times. Because the training program exceeds his term of service, no Romanian conscript completes the entire program. Most Romanian emigres report that their units simply never trained above company level.

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Mountain Warfare.

stress the importance of mountain warfare for their national defense strategy, and the training program is intended to develop the skills necessary for such operations. One of Romania's two large training areas is in the mountains outside Cluj-Napoca, and all ground units are required to train there at least once every other training cycle.

Even the training provided for the elite mountain infantry troops appears to be elementary. The principal method of training is marching in the mountains, a critical but still basic skill. Only career officers receive training in mountain climbing. Moreover, the one- to three-week course in skiing is barely satisfactory to familiarize conscripts with the basic techniques. After observing one demonstration of skiing by the mountain infantry, the US defense attache reported that their performance was, at best, mediocre.

Several of Romania's allies also conduct training in mountain warfare, and some, particularly Hungary, provide better training than Romania. Most Pact countries train one or more units for operations in the mountains. the Soviets are demanding more emphasis on such training.

Patriotic Guards. Romania's paramilitary Patriotic Guards receive more military training than reservists elsewhere in the Pact. This training is conducted after hours and on weekends and consists primarily of films and lectures. In addition, Patriotic Guards units are expected to conduct marksmanship training every six months. Reports by emigres vary, but some units also conduct training in platoon- and company-level drills for the defense of their local areas once or twice each year. In contrast, reservists in other Pact countries are rarely called up for training more than once after active duty and are often used for maintenance and labor rather than trained in their military skills.

in recent speeches Ceausescu has ordered the military to improve cooperation with the

Patriotic Guards. Patriotic Guards staffs and local defense councils apparently participate in most staff exercises at regimental or higher echelons, and the new army commands supervise field training by Patriotic Guards units.

Constraints

Romania places greater constraints on the time and means available for military training than any other member of the Pact. These constraints are imposed directly by the use of conscripts for civilian labor and by strict norms for the use of equipment, fuel, and ammunition and indirectly by the efforts required to maintain old equipment.

Labor.

the Romanians use conscripts on civilian projects during their training programs. Compressed training schedules theoretically permit units to send conscripts to construction projects and farms for three to four months each cycle. During these months, units were expected to conduct some military training on worksites; however, none of the emigres who worked on these projects reported any training.

In the last few years this planned integration of labor and military training has degenerated so much that the Romanian ground forces has primarily become a source of cheap labor for the economy. Several emigres who served during the early 1980s have reported that they were sent to labor projects within weeks after induction.

The systematic exploitation of conscripts for labor has had a devastating impact on training. Romanian conscripts can expect to spend at least four of their 16 months on labor projects, and those scheduled for release in the fall can expect to have their active duty extended for two to three months until the harvest is completed. The massive use of conscripts for labor probably will continue until the Romanian economy improves.

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preserve the operational life of equipment, the Romanians apparently have set extremely strict limits on the annual use of equipment and on the number of vehicles to be used in field training at each echelon. Even these strict limits have not been adequate to maintain the equipment for training. Several emigres have reported that the lack of tanks in operating condition seriously affected training in their units. One emigre reported that, in part because of the poor condition of his unit's equipment, the average tank driver in his unit had less than one hour's driving per training cycle. Another emigre reported that the troops in his unit were so frustrated with the condition of the equipment that fistfights broke out when a tank was repaired to decide who would drive it.

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Individual Training.

indicates that Romanian conscripts receive far less training than their Soviet counterparts. If they are not assigned to labor projects, Romanian conscripts can expect to receive from 860 to 1,120 hours of training over 16 months. If they have labor projects for four months, this drops to 720 to 840 hours.

Soviet conscripts in ready divisions are expected to complete 2,604 hours of training over two years. The Romanian conscript, therefore, can expect, at best, to receive 43 percent of the training provided to his Soviet counterpart and more likely less than 30 percent

Deficiencies

while many of Romania's shortcomings are endemic throughout the Pact, they are particularly severe in Romania. The Romanians generally gloss over their shortcomings but criticism occasionally emerges. Some of their primary complaints are:

- NCOs are poorly trained to teach conscripts.
- Conscripts and even junior officers are poorly trained to operate their weapons.
- Junior officers are poorly trained in tactics.
- Units are not prepared for combined-arms operations.

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Conclusions

Romania's ground forces could be described as the Pact's hollow army. Despite recent improvements in equipment, Romanian ground units are still among the worst equipped and worst trained in the Pact. Even after mobilization these units would be comparable only to the weaker cadre divisions in the Soviet Union, units that require extensive preparations and training before undertaking offensive operations.

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The reduced time available for training is reflected in differences in the frequency of various types of training for Romanian and other Pact conscripts (see table 5). The Romanian conscript simply has far less experience firing his weapon or driving his vehicle than his Pact counterparts. Similarly, Romanian units have less time and opportunity to develop unit cohesion among the assigned conscripts than most other Pact units. Again, this experience is not entirely unique. Soviet emigres who served in cadre divisions in the USSR have reported similar low levels of practical training.

Equipment. The condition of equipment in most Romanian units has had a major impact on training. To

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Table 5
Soviet and Romanian Conscripts: Frequency of Training

Type of training	Soviet Ready Divisions	Soviet Not-Ready Divisions	Romanian Divisions
Marksmanship, tactical drill	Three times each week	Once every six months	Once every two to three months ^a
Tank gunnery			
Subcaliber	Three times each week	Once every year ^b	Once every two to three months
Live fire	Once every six months	Once every year ^b	^c
Company field exercises	Eight times each year	Once every six months	Once or twice every eight months
Battalion field exercises	Four times each year	Once each year	Twice in two years
Regiment field exercises	Twice each year	Twice every five years	Twice in two years
Division field exercises	Once each year	Once every five years	Once every two to five years

^a Some Romanian units, like Soviet cadre units, only fire once every six months.

^b Tank units in not-ready divisions usually do not have tank gunners and commanders in peacetime. These units usually call up reservists each year to conduct training up to battalion level and conduct subcaliber and live-fire qualification tests during these exercises.

^c [redacted] the
Romanians do not conduct live-fire training in their tank units in peacetime.

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Romania's limited offensive capabilities would almost certainly restrict its role in a Pact war with NATO, even in the unlikely case that Romania actively supported the effort. Romania's role probably would be limited during the initial stages of a war to guarding the lines of communication, a role similar to that of Poland's Internal Front in Central Europe.

increased Romania's military capabilities. These changes, however, have been directed toward national defense, not Pact offensive doctrine. Some of the changes actually may complicate any attempt to cooperate with the Pact. [redacted]

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Romanian forces might be used for subsequent Pact operations in the Balkans but would need several months of training to correct peacetime deficiencies. This additional time would improve the ability of conscripts to use their equipment but would do little to compensate for the poor quality of the equipment. Even when fully trained, Romanian units would be only marginally effective for offensive operations.

The improvements in organization and equipment in recent years have been balanced by a marked decline in readiness and training in ground units. The Romanians apparently have sacrificed current readiness for future capabilities by investing in new equipment rather than training. Moreover, the use of conscripts for labor and the decline in training have forced the Romanians to emphasize the role of the Patriotic Guards at a very early stage during any invasion.

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The reorganization of command, the introduction of new equipment, and the formation of new units have

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The contribution of the Patriotic Guards to Romania's defense strategy has been increasing for several years. Romania's conscripts and reservists receive less training than their counterparts in the Pact. The Patriotic Guards, on the other hand, receive more regular training than reservists anywhere in the Pact, are maintained as cohesive units for long periods, and are assigned to clearly defined missions for local defense. These factors should improve their effectiveness during conventional and guerrilla operations.

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Despite improvements in the ground forces and the Patriotic Guards, the Romanian strategy is, at best, a means to delay defeat. The Romanians regard an intervention by the Pact as the most likely military threat. Although they cannot hope to defeat Pact forces, the Romanians can make such an invasion a protracted and costly operation. Moreover, the will to do so apparently exists. Even emigres who freely criticize their military equipment and the quality of their military training were convinced that their units would fight if Romania were invaded.

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Over the next several years the Romanians probably will continue to improve their defensive capabilities. New ground units probably will be formed to fill out the new armies, and additional equipment will be deployed to replace obsolete weapons and to correct shortages. The rate of deployment, however, probably will depend on improvements in the economy. At the same time, integration of Patriotic Guards into local and regional defense plans probably will improve through increased joint training.

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Any major change in Romania's relations with the Pact is unlikely in the near future. Even in the unlikely event that the Romanians resolved their differences with the Soviets, it would be difficult to reverse the trends of the past decade.

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